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associated AV capture and reproduction capabilities for capturing and reproducing video images and spoken audio of said participants, said workstations being interconnected by a first network, said network providing a data path for carrying digital data signals among said workstations, the teleconferencing system comprising:

- (a) a data conference capture tools for capturing data generated at a workstation of a preparing participant;
- (b) annotation tools for annotating said captured data; and
- (c) a multimedia mail system for preparing and storing, as a multimedia mail message, said captured and annotated data, and for forwarding said multimedia mail message to a receiving participant, whereby said multimedia mail message can be received at any one of at least three collaborative venues being
 - (i) in real time at a location removed from said preparing participant;
 - (ii) at a different time at the same location as said message was prepared; or
 - (iii) at a different time at a location removed from said preparing participant.

4. The teleconferencing system of claim 3 wherein said multimedia mail system is in communication with a graphical animations originator device which can generate, save and replay animated graphical images to be included in a multimedia mail message.

5. A teleconferencing system for conducting a teleconference among a plurality of participants having workstations with associated monitors for displaying visual images, and with associated AV capture and reproduction capabilities for capturing and reproducing video images

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and spoken audio of said participants, said workstations being interconnected by a first network, said network providing a data path for carrying digital data signals among said workstations, the teleconferencing system comprising:

- (a) an AV conference capture tools for capturing audio and video generated, during a videoconference, at the workstation of a preparing participant; and
- (b) a multimedia mail system for preparing and storing, as a multimedia mail message, said captured video and audio for forwarding said multimedia mail message to a receiving participant whereby said multimedia mail message can be received at any one of at least three collaborative venues being
 - (i) in real time at a location removed from said preparing participant;
 - (ii) at a different time at the same location as said message was prepared; or
 - (iii) at a different time at a location removed from said preparing participant.

6. The teleconferencing system of claim 5 wherein the captured video images and audio includes video images and spoken audio directly associated with said preparing participant and at least one of video images and audio not directly associated with said preparing participant.

7. The teleconferencing system according to claim 5 further comprising:

- (a) a message marker for defining a marked portion of a multimedia mail message;
- and
- wherein said marked portion can be selectively displayed by said receiving participant when said multimedia mail message is reproduced.

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8. The teleconferencing system according to claim 7 further comprising a tag searcher for searching for a defined tag whereby said portion of said message can be selectively displayed.

9. The teleconferencing system according to claim 8 wherein said tag searcher can search a plurality of multimedia mail messages to locate said defined tag.

10. The teleconferencing system of claim 5, further comprising:

(a) a data conference manager for managing a data conference during which data are shared among a plurality of said participants and displayed on the monitors of their respective workstations; and

(b) a multimedia conference recorder for synchronizing and recording both the video image and spoken audio of said participants during said videoconference and the data shared during said data conference.

11. The teleconferencing system of claim 10 further comprising:

(a) capture tools for capturing said data to be shared; and

(b) annotation tools for annotating said shared data during a data conference,

wherein said multimedia conference recorder is operable to synchronize the playback of said annotated data conference recordings with said videoconference recordings.

12. The teleconferencing system of claim 10 wherein the multimedia mail system includes the multimedia conference recorder and a multimedia document storage and display mechanism

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for storing a multimedia document such that the multimedia document can be retrieved by a participant.

13. The teleconferencing system of claim 12 wherein information can be transferred between the multimedia mail system, the multimedia conference recorder and the multimedia document storage.

14. The teleconferencing system of claim 10 further comprising:

(a) an AV file system for storing and retrieving both the video image and spoken audio of said preparing participant and said recorded video image and spoken audio.

C' 15. The teleconferencing system of claim 5, further comprising:

(a) a multimedia mail depository associated with the receiving participant and being operable to receive and store multimedia mail messages under direction of the preparing participant.

16. The teleconferencing system of claim 15 wherein the mail depository is operable, by the preparing the participant, to receive mail messages having at least one component selected from the group consisting of audio, video and data components.

17. A teleconferencing system for conducting a teleconference among a plurality of participants having workstations with associated monitors for displaying visual images, and with associated AV capture and reproduction capabilities for capturing and reproducing video images

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and spoken audio of said participants, said workstations being interconnected by a first network, said network providing a data path for carrying digital data signals among said workstations, the teleconferencing system comprising:

- (a) a data conference manager for managing a data conference during which data are shared among a plurality of said participants and displayed on the monitors of their respective workstations;
- (b) an AV path for carrying AV signals among said workstations, said AV signals representing video images and/or spoken audio of said participants;
- (c) an AV conference manager for managing a videoconference during which the video image and spoken audio of one of said participants is reproduced at the workstation of another of said participants; and
- (d) a multimedia mail system for storing, as a multimedia mail message, data and/or AV signals generated at the workstation of a preparing participant, during said teleconference and for forwarding said multimedia mail message to a receiving participant.

18. A teleconferencing system for conducting a teleconference among a plurality of participants having workstations with associated monitors for displaying visual images, and with associated AV capture and reproduction capabilities for capturing and reproducing video images and spoken audio of said participants, said workstations being interconnected by a first network, said network providing a data path for carrying digital data signals among said workstations, the teleconferencing system comprising:

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(a) an AV path for carrying AV signals among said workstations, said AV signals representing video images and/or spoken audio of said participants;

(b) an AV conference manager for managing a videoconference during which the video image and spoken audio of one of said participants can be reproduced at the workstation of another of said participants; and, at least one of

(c) a multimedia mail system for storing, as a multimedia mail message, AV signals generated at the workstation of a preparing participant, and for forwarding said multimedia mail message to a receiving participant; or

a multimedia conference recorder for recording the AV signals representing the video images and spoken audio of said participants during said videoconference,

whereby said AV path carries the AV signals generated during said videoconference, recorded by said multimedia conference recorder, and included in said multimedia mail message.

19. The teleconferencing system of claim 18, further comprising:

(a) an AV storage server for storing AV signals prepared by said multimedia mail system or recorded by said multimedia conference recorder, wherein

(i) said AV signals carried from said workstations to said AV storage server can be either analog or digital signals;

(ii) said AV signals carried from said AV storage server to said workstations can be either analog or digital signals; and

(iii) said AV signals can be stored in said AV storage server either in analog or digital formats.

20. A method of conducting a teleconference among a plurality of participants having workstations with associated monitors for displaying visual images, and with associated AV capture and reproduction capabilities for capturing and reproducing video images and spoken audio of said participants, said workstations being interconnected by a first network, said network providing a data path for carrying digital data signals among said workstations, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) capturing data generated at a workstation of a preparing participant;
- (b) annotating said captured data;
- (c) preparing and storing, as a multimedia mail message, said captured and annotated data; and
- (d) forwarding said multimedia mail message for receipt, by a receiving participant, at any one of at least three collaborative venues being
- (i) in real time at a location removed from said preparing participant;
 - (ii) at a different time at the same location as said message was prepared; or
 - (iii) at a different time at a location removed from said preparing participant.

21. The method of claim 20 further comprising the steps of generating, saving and replaying animated graphical images included in a multimedia mail message.

22. A method for conducting a teleconference among a plurality of participants having workstations with associated monitors for displaying visual images, and with associated AV capture and reproduction capabilities for capturing and reproducing video images and spoken

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audio of said participants, said workstations being interconnected by a first network, said network providing a data path for carrying digital data signals among said workstations, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) capturing audio and video generated, during a videoconference, at the workstation of a preparing participant;
- (b) preparing and storing, as a multimedia mail message, said captured video and audio; and
- (c) forwarding said multimedia mail message for receipt, by a receiving participant, at any one of at least three collaborative venues being
 - (i) in real time at a location removed from said preparing participant;
 - (ii) at a different time at the same location as said message was prepared; or
 - (iii) at a different time at a location removed from said preparing participant.

21. The method of claim 22 further comprising the steps of

- (a) defining a marked portion of a multimedia mail message; and
- (b) selectively displaying the marked portion when said multimedia mail message is reproduced.

24. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of:

- (a) searching for a defined tag; and
- (b) selectively displaying said portion of said message.

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25. The method claim 22, further comprising the steps of:

- (a) managing a data conference during which data are shared among a plurality of said participants and displayed on the monitors of their respective workstations;
- (b) synchronizing both the video image and spoken audio of said participants during said videoconference and the data shared during said data conference; and
- (c) recording the synchronized video, audio and data.

26. The method of claim 25 further comprising the steps of:

- (a) capturing said data to be shared; and
- (b) annotating said shared data during a data conference.

27. The method of claim 25 further comprising the step of for storing a multimedia document such that the multimedia document can be retrieved by a participant.

28. A method of conducting a teleconference among a plurality of participants having workstations with associated monitors for displaying visual images, and with associated AV capture and reproduction capabilities for capturing and reproducing video images and spoken audio of said participants, said workstations being interconnected by a first network, said network providing a data path for carrying digital data signals among said workstations, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) carrying AV signals among said workstations, said AV signals representing video images and/or spoken audio of said participants;